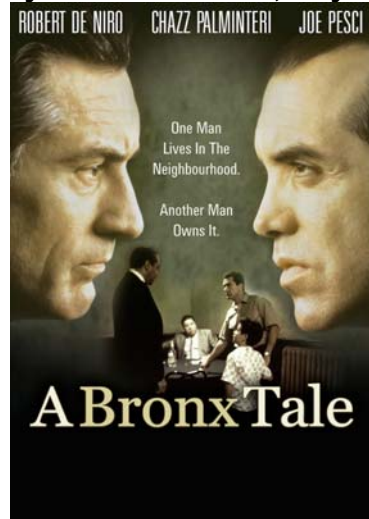


A BRONX TALE
By Lorraine Viade, Psy.D.



A Bronx Tale is one of those classic movies that has moral lesson written all over it. Coming from the South Bronx, it should come as no surprise to any of you that this coming-of-age story is one of my all-time favorites.

Chazz Palminteri stars as the mobster with a hard heart and even harder soul. And yet, as with some movie criminals, he does have one soft spot. He takes a young boy under his protective wing with the loving and noble protests of the boy's "do the right thing" father played by Robert De Niro. As the boy grows into a man, he learns important life lessons from both of these important figures in his life.

So, why do I choose this film to review? Because what I have found is that a lot of young people in our systems lack the right kind of role models and they don't learn the right lessons from their street experiences. The gangster life is glorified as a quick money-making way around the "suckers" who work an honest day for honest pay. Choosing one path over the other is what this movie is all about. Besides the terrific acting by both men, everyone is up to the task of dealing with the day-to-day choices that are made on the stoops and streets of the city. Even the choice of who to love is not easy in the Bronx.

Watching it again, I was reminded of the choices I made growing up and how grateful I am that my parents gave me the type of foundation and encouragement to make the kind of choices that lead me here to be able to write this today. I faced many of the same choices growing up. I almost didn't make it. Back in the day, gangs and racial issues confronted you on every corner. They are still there in full force.

Today, the violence is even more intense and the influx of so many more mind-altering drugs make it even more important for kids to know that it is okay to want a better life without turning to crime to do it. The characters in this film all knew

it. I wish more of our kids knew it, too. We face the stiff competition of the lure of money power and the rule of community through fear. But standing up for what is right in the face of what is wrong is never, ever a bad decision.

If you have never seen this film, please check it out. I give *A Bronx Tale* five couches.

